

Sector Ohio Valley Waterways Action Plan change summary for 2011

The majority of Waterways Action Plan (WAP) changes for 2011 are redefining triggers for actions to take at locks and dams and updating points of contact. However, we are making two large changes to the WAP: the addition of the Green River and the creation of an industry group covering both Cumberland and Tennessee River Basins. When the WAP was originally written, the Green River was maintained for recreational purposes and did not have commercial traffic. During the intervening years, new coal mines have opened near the river and existing mines have shifted transportation preference from truck and rail to water. Incidents at Lock 2 during last year's high water highlighted the need to provide pre-vetted waterways controls options for the Green. During the Nashville flood of 2010, we discovered that the separate industry groups covering the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers were improperly populated and unable to provide the crucial decision-making expertise we needed. Once we identified the right industry collaborators, we discovered that the majority of people had interests on both rivers. This prompted the creation of the Tennessee-Cumberland Industry Committee covering both rivers. Here is an overall summary of WAP changes throughout Sector Ohio Valley:

1. Pittsburgh: Updated gauge height triggers at certain locks to redefine watch and action phases.
2. Huntington: Updated personnel only. Upon thorough review, industry, Army Corps, and Coast Guard agreed that all current triggers and waterways management options provided sufficient methods to address waterways risks.
3. Cincinnati: Modified the high-water Regulated Navigation Area's template broadcast notice to mariners (BNM) by changing "entry into" to "transit through." This harmonizes the broadcast with the regulations and will help reinforce to industry that applicable vessels are not allowed to continue transiting the RNA after dark, even if they entered it before dark. Also, we added potential recreational boating management schemes during land-based events like football games and popular concerts that draw large recreational boating populations.
4. Green River (Louisville): Added Locks 1 & 2 to the WAP, including gauge height triggers, navigating recommendations, and template Broadcast Notices to Mariners. We also added appropriate triggers, navigating recommendations, and a template broadcast notice to mariners to address the risks posed by the CSX Railroad Bridge at MM 8.4.
5. Louisville: Explained the difference in the need for helper boats between Newburgh & J. T. Meyers Locks and Dams. During high water conditions where the locks have ceased operations and water is high enough for vessels to "transit the weir," vessels transiting J. T. Meyers require more assistance than those transiting Newburgh.
6. Paducah: Updated personnel only. Upon thorough review, industry, Army Corps, and Coast Guard agreed that all current triggers and waterways management options provided sufficient methods to address waterways risks.
7. Nashville AOR: Added the newly created Tennessee-Cumberland Industry Committee and its membership. Additionally, we updated gauge height triggers at certain locks to redefine watch and action phases.